

2001 Amherst Police Report

The Amherst Police Department remains committed to providing high quality community policing services to the Town of Amherst. These services, which extend from the traditional law enforcement functions to those services designed to enhance the quality of life in our Town, have provided well for the Town.

Over the past several years, the Department has worked hard to reduce our burglary rate, as well as to address the growing number of complaints concerning neighborhood traffic. There has been a high degree of success in maintaining a low incidence of burglary, with the rate for the last three years averaging over fifty percent lower than 1997. The success in addressing traffic concerns, however, has been less obvious. Traffic safety, in general, continues to be a concern of the Department. Not only did the number of motor vehicle crashes increase to numbers not seen in twelve years, two of the accidents involved fatalities, the first in four years. In addition, after a two-year decline, the number of motor vehicle complaints from citizens also increased. The new motorcycle program, which was instituted this year to reduce neighborhood speeding, was visible in many neighborhoods, and appeared to have an impact in those areas that received the most attention. It is the goal of the Department to continue to develop this program, increasing the number of patrols that use the motorcycle and expanding the areas it is used in. In addition, the Department is seeking to purchase a radar display board in the upcoming year, which will be used in various neighborhoods to heighten the awareness of the motorist.

In reviewing other statistics, the number of total crimes is up significantly, with the majority of the increase being the sharp rise in fraud cases. The number of arrests is down, with a continuing decline in the number of juvenile detentions. Assaults, typically either domestic related or involving juveniles, are down over fifty percent from last year and sixty-five percent from four years ago. Although thefts increased by eighteen percent this past year, the number of thefts has fluctuated over recent years, and is at the same level as four years ago.

As a means of maintaining a safe environment in our schools, the Department has been working closely with school administrators for the past several years in an effort to bring a School Resource Officer to the Amherst Schools. In addition to the benefit a safe environment brings to the learning process, this position would also help foster relationships between students/faculty and the police, as well as contribute to the students education by providing instruction in appropriate topics. The Department will be seeking town funds, much of which would be repaid by federal funds, to implement this program in the local schools this coming year.

The Department would like to thank both the Amherst Fire Department and Amherst Emergency Medical Services for their cooperation over the past year. The working relationship between the Town's emergency services continues to be excellent, as was well demonstrated at the scene of a fatal plane crash into a residence this past August.

The Department would also like to thank the Town for their support. It is this support that enables the Department to provide the level of services the townspeople have come to expect. As in the past, we remain open to any suggestions as to how we may better serve you, and invite you to contact the Department with any problems, concerns, or other input you might have.